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Théodore Rousseau, showing a country road beside a little pool surrounded by trees in late afternoon sunlight. The other is a charming Corot called the Wheelwright's Yard on the Banks of the Seine.<sup>1</sup> In the cool shade of big trees two men are working on a log, another is in a lean-to shop beside the vine-covered corner of a red brick house.

## A PAIR OF LARGILLIÈRE PORTRAITS

THE sumptuous portraits of the Baron and Baroness of Prangins<sup>1</sup> by Largillière recently purchased by the Museum are not only the most triumphantly accomplished, one had almost said flauntingly



THE BARON OF PRANGINS BY LARGILLIÈRE

A man seen through an opening of the trees, going off to the Seine with fishing poles, gives a holiday touch to the busy place. Robaut dates it (No. 1460) between 1865 and 1870, the same period in which the pictures in the Wolfe and Altman Collections were painted by Corot. It was shown in the Exposition of the École des Beaux-Arts in 1875, belonging then to M. Charles Lecesne. J. M. L.

<sup>1</sup>Oil on canvas; height, 18½; width, 21⅞ inches.

boastful, achievements of the portraitist's craft, they are beyond this an engagingly revealing product of the age and realm in which they were painted. Largillière's

<sup>1</sup>The portraits are painted in oil on canvas: height, 54¼; width, 41½ inches. They hang in Gallery 20. Both were formerly in the collection of the Count of Kerjéku. The portrait of the Baroness was included in the Chabert sale, 1909, and in 1910 was exhibited in Paris among the Cent Portraits de Femmes de XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 72.

career was a protracted one. His sixty-odd years of activity covered the last thirty years of Louis XIV's reign and, bridging the period of the Regency, carried him well into the time of Louis XV. From the first he had been taken under the wing of Le Brun, czar of the arts, and had rapidly gained the first rank as a fashion-

revoked, and the ruinous War of the Spanish Succession had not yet been thought of. Versailles was swarming with the resplendent noblesse of France. The ambitious knew well that favors and privileges were out of the question for those who were not to be seen dancing attendance at the court of the monarch. To be



THE BARONESS OF PRANGINS BY LARGILLIÈRE

able historical painter and portraitist of the upper bourgeoisie and the nobility. According to Charles Blanc he painted not less than fifteen hundred portraits in the course of his life.

When Largillière had withdrawn from the English court of Charles II and had come to Paris to make his way, the Sun King had not yet sunk perceptibly below the zenith. Colbert had only just died, the Edict of Nantes had not yet been

an absentee from Versailles was to be a nobody.

Whether it was the hope of the king's favor that first lured the subjects of our portraits to the court, we do not know. In memoirs and histories of many brilliant personages of that time we find little mention of the Swiss nobles, the Baron and Baroness of Prangins. We are able to conclude from the fashion of their clothes that at the time of the Regency this com-

fortable-looking couple were in Paris where the never idle brush of Largillière could immortalize their personalities and their prosperity. Perhaps like most of the leisured class of France, as well as many an adventurous foreigner, they had been attracted to Paris by the miraculous opportunity to get rich which the financial wizard John Law was then offering to noble and butcher's boy alike through his shares in the Mississippi Company. If this was the errand of our friends, they must have been among the fortunate who withdrew before it was too late; for it was in 1723, four years after the greatest inflation of the Bubble, that the Château of Prangins was built above the Lake of Geneva not far from Lausanne—a château which was to be the place of refuge of Voltaire in 1754 and 1755 when he had found Prussia not to his taste. In 1814 the castle was bought by Joseph Bonaparte after his unsuccessful adventure as King of Spain, and once more the spot-light shines on it in March, 1921, when Charles, ex-Emperor of Austria, is reported as setting out from the Château of Prangins in an abortive attempt to reclaim his throne.

Returning to the portraits of the builders of the castle, we find them portraits of the semi-official type, to be sure, with much insistence upon grandeur and fine feathers. If Largillière flattered his sitters it was not by the wholesale sacrifice of their personalities which was common later in the century. In the Baron we see a self-indulgent man whose flaccid face suggests that he shared the foible of that age of over-eating. He wears the enormous wig which had become the fashion in the time of Louis XIV and the powder has shaken out of it on to the shoulder of his splendid brown velvet coat. He stands with one hand resting on a stone balustrade while the other is held out in an attitude of elegant authority which recalls the artistic pedigree of Largillière, for it was a favorite gesture with Van Dyck's sitters, and our artist had his training from Antoine Goubeau at Antwerp and in England from Peter Lely, Van Dyck's immediate successor as painter of Britain's aristocracy.

The portrait of the Baroness<sup>1</sup> again is sumptuous and perhaps flattering, but it has decided character. The painting is a triumph of flamboyant virtuosity. In so superb a virtuoso, as Paul Mantz justly says, we can pardon a little flourish of trumpets. Her fair skin and the marvelously painted white satin of her dress are placed against a green velvet curtain of great richness. Her girdle is of garnet color embroidered with gold and she wears red flowers at her breast and in her hair. The strongly modeled hand is again held out in a gesture elegant but, taken in connection with the face, hardly pompous. For the Baroness was clearly a serene and amiable lady, plump and fond of good living. The foling quatrain which was current in Paris during the Regency and which has come down to us gives a clue to the form of flattery in the Baroness' portrait:

Le Tsar aime les femmes fortes,  
Si Prangins ne lui déplaît pas,  
C'est que ses opulents appas  
Ont grand' peine à passer les portes.  
H. B. W.

## AN EARLY BUDDHISTIC PAINTING

THE earliest Buddhist paintings which have come down to us are those found by Sir Aurel Stein in the neighborhood of Khotan in Chinese Turkestan, and the frescoes found by A. von Lecoq in Chot-scho. The former have been almost miraculously preserved in a walled-up deposit of manuscripts and paintings in the so-called Thousand Buddha grotto; the latter are frescoes in Buddhist temples and Manichean churches preserved because the region was deserted when the rivers, and so the whole country, dried up. Though as yet it has not been possible to date the individual pieces, we know that the latest cannot have been painted later than during the T'ang period (618-906 A. D.) and that some must be as early as 200 A. D.

<sup>1</sup>In the collection of the Queen of Holland is a miniature of the Baroness de Prangins. In *Oude Kunst*, 1916, p. 301, it is attributed to Massé and is mistakenly called a portrait of Elizabeth I of Russia.